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DISCUSSIONS
ON ISAIAH





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Discussions on Isaiah,

(ch. LII. 13 ff., and ch. LIII.)

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY,

WITH

PRELIMINARY NOTES.

—ON—

JUDEAO-POLEMIC LITERATURE,

—BY—

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New York City.

1893.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,
THE REV. DR. WILLIAM HAYES WARD, D.D.,
Editor of "THE INDEPENDENT,"
AS A TOKEN OF WARM ADMIRATION.

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DISCUSSIONS ON THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH.

From an unpublished polemical MS. of the XVI. century
with an introduction on controversial literature.

Israel is a nation of martyrs. Bravery in all its sterling valor and Spartan stoicism is aptly represented by that staunch, dauntless, hunted, chosen race, surnamed by the romance of popular sympathy: "The Wandering Jew." We have suffered much and murmured less; the annals of history teem with the atrocious crimes of cruel Torquemadas, but fail to reproach us with even a breath of remonstrance. The fiendish tortures of mediæval inquisition elicited merely a physical groan of pain from our intrepid co-religionists, though the rack of reckless bigotry aimed to crush the spirit, not the frame. In the drear silence of ominous solitude, we sobbed out our hearts in soul stirring melodies, in irresistible strains of poetic ecstasy, which burst forth, like some volcano of seething wrath, from the crater of inspired genius,

we whispered sweetly of our wrongs, not imprecations of revenge, but hope-fraught hymns of glad release from the thralldom, which encompassed our spirit as effectually, as did the Ghetto walls our homes.

The exile's staff, as if vested with those wondrous gifts of heavenly grace, which possessed our law-giver's wand, wrought marvelous change with time's swift flight. It always served to carry on the footsore Jew, to goad him on his pilgrimage. When weary treading many miles, he by the wayside sought repose, his wander-staff became a flute upon which the sad Pariah played a mystic serenade. With that same wand, his sole support on stony roads he wrote the Word, and fought his foes, not with the slander of abuse, but with conscious right of truth,—the signet ring of God. The Jew confided to but one trusty agent the story of his life, the legend of his woes, and the fever of his throes,—to one, silent, yet communicative friend, who cheered the midnight gloom of his life's darkening shadows,—the Book.

The "people of the Book" found tender solace in this aged Writ, which gently turned to harmony the poetic Hebrew soul, when the lyre of distress was wrung with tremulous

sounds. The Jew and Moses' magic staff—the Bible—was bosomfriends, who vowed eternal loyalty in every walk of life.

Only when this immortal heritage of our undying race was seized to fuel the greedy flames of fanaticism, did our hearts vibrate with virtuous passions of national indignation, and we yearned to show our love and allegiance to the Godly counselor, by ardent chants of praise. Eagerly we grasped the pen,—again our magic wand—and with the delirium of prophetic eloquence, with the frenzy of wounded pride, yet with the convincing might of rational philosophy, we argued, lauded and defined the depth of Scriptural wisdom, and refuted fraudulent charges against our honor, from the very Book, which, as is alleged by some, predicted the arrival of the Christian Messiah. The Jew was never aggressive; calmly content with the mystic quiet, which forebode the dawn of fierce persecution, happy in the menacing lull, which precedes every revolutionary crisis, he revelled in the luxury of unmolested peace, and courted the obscurity of his impregnable fortress, the oft invaded sanctum of his faith. Despite his natural aversion to controversy, however, the Jew of the middle

ages (which harbored and sanctioned the supreme reign of Christian intolerance), became frequently involved in theological disputations, in fact, dragged at times, before a mighty tribunal of Christian justice, loaded with most absurd accusations, if he chanced to contradict the ridiculous theories advanced by pious ministers of the church, who zealously expounded the Gospel through perverted Old Testament prophecies.

It is, therefore, of engrossing interest to note the sturdy systematic and unbiased arguments set forth by the Jews, on various themes connected with the dogmas of Christianity as illustrated or explained by Hebrew prophecies, detailed with unruffled philosophic temper in able commentaries on the Holy Writ, or in polemic productions, which are for the most part unpublished, owing to the bitter prejudice prevailing throughout all ages and climes, which could not countenance the participation of Israelites in religious philosophical discussions, viewed in the light of *Jewish* conceptions.

Since science, however, unfurled the glorious standard of liberty, many noble literateurs are enlisted under the folds of her blessed banner, and contributed by courage-

ous example to the development of humanitarian ideas, and to the enlightenment and gratification of rational ideals. Israel, the hated' outcast, who keeps pace with every stride of culture, civilization and progress, lead the intellectual movement, and now stands at the helm of the iron craft of learning, side by side with the Gentile, unexposed, as of yore, to ridicule and oppression, save in the land, where the sun of justice and fraternal equity does not shine. Here, with the wave of the stars and stripes, the sublimest symbol of genuine freedom, our hearts responsive beat, and chant the chorus of patriotic love, which rules America's sons.

The Jew, breathes the same undefiled fragrance of virgin air, which buoys up the faith of all good men, be he the scion of the Gods, of Allah or of unnamed creed, be he even devoid of belief in God revealed, or unrevealed. Freedom of thought, by conscience trained, is written upon her sands, and all can write, with *equal* right on things divine, or men. We feel ourselves therefore at perfect ease in dilating upon a subject, which has been styled by a liberal writer, "the fire brand of theology," namely the exposition of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, claimed by non-

Jewish interpreters to be a typical representation of the Messiahship of Jesus. The views expounded in the following arguments cannot lay claim to deep philosophical erudition, nor are they wholly unfamiliar to us, for similar proofs have been offered by other writers, renowned not only for their unprejudiced standpoint, but for their logical, masterly treatment of exegetical problems. The textual exposition of our anonymous scribe, as well as his honest, straightforward style, unembellished by needless phraseology, and unsullied by bitter invectives or, even by the milder mode of expression, a modified sting of satire, commends itself most forcibly to our appreciation. Before we enter into fuller description of our MS., we desire to give a brief outline of polemical literature in general.

Anti-Christian polemical literature is too extensive to be exhaustively sketched in the present article. We will merely enumerate the most important items, and refer the reader to special treatises on the subject, where a complete bibliography is rendered. De Rossi's register: "**Bibliotheca Judaica Antichristiana**" (Parma, 1800) is an indispensable handbook on Jewish

Christian controversies. Dr. M. Steinschneider's able essay: "**Polemische und Apologetische Literatur in Arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden**" (Abh. f.d. Kunde des Morgenlandes, Bd. VI. No. 3, Leipzig, 1878) is replete with valuable references on this topic. The literature on Isaiah ch. liii. is accurately compiled in Dr. A. Neubauer's scholarly edition: "**The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters**" in II.¹ vols. Vol. I.: Texts, by A. N.; II.: Translations by S. R. Driver and A. N., with an introduction by Dr. Pusey. (Oxford, 1877). In the introduction to this admirable collection of Hebrew commentaries on the vital passage in **Isaiah**, are cited all works, notably of a controversial character, which illustrate the remarkable erudition attained by the Jews, not only in Old Testament exposition, but in Gospel criticism. Dr. Neubauer's collectanea are of particular value in this regard. The list, which we furnish, presents merely a cursory view of the vast literature extant. For completeness sake, we would advise those specially concerned, to consult the catalogues of

various libraries, public and private, where precise descriptions are given of all MSS. and printed works. Those of the learned bibliographers, Drs. Neubauer, Steinschneider, Perreau, Mortara, de Rossi, Zedner, Zunz, and others, contain instructive notices. From Dr. Neubauer's large "**Catalogue of the Hebrew Mss. in the Bodleian Library**," etc., etc. (Oxford, MDCCCLXXXVI) we glean the following items, alphabetically arranged under the heading:* Controversy (ויכוח)

Religious: See Aaron (Hayyim) Volterra: 2404, Abdias (in Latin): 2320^h, Abraham Samuel Bacharach: 2149¹, Abraham Ferusol (פריצול): 665²; 2018⁴; 2165—2166; 2295², Abraham Guer: 2173¹, Alfonso (Maestro): 2151; 2152¹, Benjamin ben Moses: 2408³, David: 2218^{4,n}, David Nasi: 2164, David Qamhi: 2149^{4,c}; 2170^{2,c}; 2289⁶, Franci (Maestro): [?], Hayyim ben Isaac: 2148², Isaac Orobio de Castro: 2471; 2474, Isaac Troki: 2170¹; 2171; 2172¹; 2403, Jacob ben Elijah: 2408¹⁰, Jacob ben Joseph

* We have carefully added the numbers in Dr. N.'s *Catalogue*, not given in the Index. The large Nos. refer to the chapter, the small numbers or letters to the subdivisions.

Gabriel [Jonah]: 2151, Jacob ben Reuben: 2146—2148; 2149²; 2207⁴, Jair ben Shabetai: 2179; 2405¹, Jehiel of Paris: 2149¹, Jonah Rapa [or Ropa]: 2221¹³, Joseph Official: 2170², Joshua Lorqui: 2218^{4,1}, Joshua Segre: 2407, Judah Briel: 2407; 2474, Koppelman ben Simeon: 2149^{4,a}, Lipman of Mühlhausen: (ספר נצחון) 1911²; [1589⁴]; 2149³; [2148⁴]; 2159—2163; [2180²; 2266⁸] 2293³; [2408⁷]*, Loeb of Trier: 2293⁴, Marco Lippomanno: 2174, Marcus: 2146, Mathithiah ben Moses: [Yizhari] 1372³; 1913⁵; 2167¹; 2168¹; 2169; 2170³, Menahem ben Schaprut: 2150, Meshulam ben Uri: 1465⁵, Mordecai ben Jehiel: 2293⁵, Moses Kohen of Tordecilla: [1796⁴]; 1592²; 1999⁴; 2158¹, Moses ben Nahman: 2192¹¹; 2408^{5a-b}; 2425¹³, Moses Rieti: 818², Phineas ben Eliezer: 2289⁶; Profet Duran: 2153¹; 2154—2155; 2158²; 2207⁵, Sa'ādja Gaon (attributed): 2148¹, Samson Kohen Modon (poem): 2406^e, Schem Tob ben Schaprut (attributed): 2148¹; 2150—2152¹. [2408⁶⁻⁹] Solomon Levi (Paul of Burgos): 2218^{4,1}, Solomon ben Moses [b. Jekuthiel] 2408², and anonymous: 258; 814⁶ (in

* The numbers in parenthesis, indicate, that the MSS., which they represent, are only fragments or extracts of the work.

Arabic); 1562³; 1628⁵; 1649⁶; 1658⁵; 1913⁵ (מה'ר"ל); 2148³; 2149⁴; 2170^{2,b}; 2172²; 2175—2178; 2180 (by Schlimel); 2218^{4,i,m,r}; 2293⁴; 2406^a; 2408^{4,8}.

Some important MSS. are also enumerated in Dr. Steinschneider—Zunz's: "אוצרות היים Katalog der Michael'schen Bibliothek," Hamburg 1848. [see furthermore: "אור ההיים "Umfassendes bibliographisches und literar-historisches Wörterbuch des rabbinischen Schriftthums" Frankfurt a. M. 1891 under author's names.] Cf. Nos. 3, 13, 229, 230, 231, 248, 341 (cp. p. 364 a scholarly note on "כלימת הגוים") 461, (cf. p. 370 note on: "מלחמות ה' לר' יעקב ב' ראובן"). See p. 12. Nos. 5395—5396; 5399—5401. (On A. Jagel's: "לקח טוב" Catechismus Judaeorum" etc. Dr. Maybaum of Berlin has prepared an interesting essay, appended to the annual report of the Rabb. Hochschule 1892). Three collections of polemical pieces are published in the little book: Sefer Hashabath Abodah (1858) א: Chasronoth M'sifre Hashass; ב: Teshuboth הרד"ק Lehanozrim (Neub. Cat. 2289⁶); ג: Shearim Misefer Haibur. Other printed works, are no doubt familiar to our readers. The two best known treatises on the subject are the "Sepher Nizachon" of

Rabbi Lippman Mühlhausen, and the "Chisuk Emuna" of Yizhak b. Abraham Troki. We need not elaborate upon the literature, already accessible to the public, our bibliographical attempt is chiefly directed to the rich material buried in the dust of libraries, and known only by superficial mention, or at best a thorough description which gives us no insight into the soul element, which agitated the author's pen. Dr. Neubauer has done a great service by his welcome contribution to controversial literature, and his painstaking abstracts from ancient Commentaries on Isaiah liii*, are at the

*) The late Prof. Dr. S. M. Schiller-Szinessy of Cambridge issued in 1882 a pamphlet of 31 pp., wherein he endeavors to expound the doubtful verses in IS. cf. **הנה ישכיל עבדי**—"An Exposition of Isaiah lii, 13, 14, 15 and liii, delivered before the Council of the Senate" etc. etc. [Cambr. and London, Deighton, Bell & Co.] Dr. M. Friedmann, Lector at the Beth Ha-Midrash in Vienna, offers very ingenious comments in an essay recently issued, entitled: "S'RUBABHEL," *Erläuterungen der Weissagung*: "Siehe, es gelingt meinem Knechte," **הנה ישכיל עבדי**.—Vienna, 1890. Printed by M. Knopfmacher; 8vo., 199 pp.

same time valuable additions to the history of Biblical exegesis. A collection and collation of controversial documents, showing the development of philosophical exegesis among the Jews from the earliest period until the present era, would be a most worthy compilation. Perhaps our learned friend, Dr. Neubauer, who has already given evidence of remarkable skill in his excellent edition of Hebrew commentators on Isaiah liii, would favor us with such selections, inasmuch, as he has free access to rare MSS. in almost every library in Europe.

Description of our Manuscript.

The MS. which engrosses our attention; was the property of the late lamented scholar, Rev. Dr. A. S. Bettelheim, Rabbi in Baltimore, who on a loose slip placed in the book, explains that he bought this remarkable work while studying in Prague many years ago. We make the following bibliographical remarks: [וְכוּהַ], DIALOGUE BETWEEN A JEW AND A CHRISTIAN, ON THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, IN 28 CHAPTERS, without title, or name of the author,—small 8°.—unedited.

The MS. is well bound in wood, covered

over with embossed leather. It contains 156 leaves, and some blank sheets, probably for corrections and additions, on either side of the book; the edges are gilt, and artistically decorated with arabesque design. Soft silk paper; the writing is neat and legible, a Spanish Italian or Spanish Hollandish hand from the 17th or the beginning of the 18th century. Our MS. seems to be a unique copy. Dr. Neubauer, to whom we applied for information, writes, in answer to our surmise concerning its identity with the controversial treatise [כבוד אלהים] mentioned in Cat. Bodl. col. 752, as follows: "Your MS. is not identical with No. 2175, nor with any other in our collection. By collating the passage: הנה ישכיל עבדי with the extracts published in my 'Fifty-Third Ch. of Isaiah Accord. to Jewish Interpreters,' you might recognize the author. The date 1555 points to a Holland-Spanish origin, perhaps cited in de Rossi's **Biblioth. Antichristiana**—". After minute collation we find, that our MS. is not mentioned either in de Rossi, or in Dr. N's. edition. From the printed fragment pasted on the cover of the book, which we have succeeded in deciphering, we glean that the

writer lived in Holland, as is indicated by the words: **Contra—Remonstrantsche Leyden.**"

In Steinschneider's "Verzeichniss der Hebr. Handschriften i. d. Königl. Bibliothek zu Berlin". (Berlin 1878) p. 51, No. 74, is mentioned a controversial document (of the year 1374): **'עזר האמונה'** by Mose Kohen *Torsilla* [Tordesila etc.] Cf. Neub. Cat. Bodl. Nos. [1796⁴]; 1592²; 1999⁴; 2158¹; also **"Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah"** [1876] i, p. xi, No. xxiv. B. Tordecilla's polemical treatise, as described by Dr. Steinschneider, seems to have some points in common with our MS., particularly in the choice of subjects, division of chapters, and similarity in introductory remarks. St. gives interesting details of this and other MSS. on pp. [52,] 21, 74, 109—110 etc.

The Hebrew bibliographer, Herr Ephraim Deinard, to whom we submitted the work for examination, pronounces it to be identical with the "Eben Bochan" of R. Schem Tob ben Yizhak ben Schaprut, [anno 5145] who after his dispute with Alphonso Maestro (cf. Neub. 2150—2152¹) revised and enlarged his dissertation, and published it again in

5155. According to Steinsch. (Catalog. Michael p. 364) it is the same as the K'limath Haggoyim, mentioned above. Other arguments are to be found in his *Berlin Cat.* p. 52. Deinard is in error. For the **אבן בוחן** was written anno 5145 respectively 5155, corresponding to 1395 (1385) of the Ch. era, and our MS. is of a much later date, 1555, as is manifest by the significant passage, (fol. 114 a) which reads:

נצר. אנו מקשים נגדיכם שזה אלף וחמש מאות
 וחמשה וחמשים שנה שתמתינו למשיחכם ולמה
 יאחרהו ה' כל כך אלא שכבר בא ולא קבלתם אותו.

“*Nazarite*: The questions we urge against you, are, why have you waited 1555 years for the coming of your Messiah, and why has the Lord so long delayed his advent? We conclude, therefore, that he did actually come, but you denied him.”—This is the only clue to the age of the work. There are altogether 28 chapters summarized with scrupulous care on pp. 153—156. Every ch. is otherwise preceded by an extra page, containing a brief outline of the contents, differing at times from the more complete index at the end of the work. We will herewith

render a short review of the various themes discussed by the author:

Chapter I. Refutes the idea that Jesus came to fulfill the Law.

Chapter II. Refutes the idea of the Trinity, giving deep philosophical researches.

Chapter III. Refutes the belief of Jesus' immaculate birth.

Chapter IV. Explains the verse "Let us make man in our image" etc.

Chapter V. Comments upon Genesis xviii, 2.

Chapter VI. Comments upon Genesis xlix, 10.

Chapter VII. Argues, that the Cherubim are not of human shape.

Chapter VIII. Disputes the Chr. conception of Azazel.

Chapter IX. Comments on Deut. xxxii, 39; X. ch. on Deut. xxvii, 26.

Chapter XI. On sacrifices; XII. ch. Explanation on ISAIAH, lii and liii.

Chapter XIII. On Isaiah xlii, 1; XIV. ch. Explanation on N. T. passages.

Chapter XV. Denies that Jesus sanctioned the violation of Mosaic dietary laws.

Chapter XVI. On Ezek. xx, 25; XVII, ch. On HOSEA vi, 3; XVIII. ch. Amos ii, 6.

Chapter XIX. Disputes the interpretation of Zech ix, 9; XX. ch. Ibidem of Psalm ii.

Chapter XXI. Expl. of Ps. xxii, 2; XXII. ch. On Ps. cx, 1; XXIII. ch. on the 70 weeks of Daniel.

Chapter XXIV. Refutes the idea that the Jews were exiled, because of Jesus' death.

Chapter XXV. On the fundamental principles of Christian faith; XXVI. ch. Further discussions.

Chapter XXVII. Reconciles seeming contradictions in the Thora, and gives chronological dates on foreign kings.

Chapter XXVIII. States why the Thora treats of worldly, and not metaphysical problems.

At present, only ch. xii. on Is. 52 and 53 concerns us. The translation is as literal as is consistent with good English idiom.

Dialogue.

(MS. pp. 55-66.)

Christian: "Behold, my servant shall be prosperous" (Isaiah lii. 13). In our estima-

tion this entire portion should be explained as referring to Jesus, our Lord, who was executed at the close of the second Temple era, and of whom the prophet wrote: "He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" (Is. liii. 4). He was stricken, smitten and afflicted, because of his Divinity, and for his having abolished the punishment of the souls caused by Adam's sin. For this reason we read "he had borne the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors" (liii. 10). "But he was wounded for our transgressions," etc. (liii. 4), indicating his atonement for the sin of the first man by his own wounds. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (liii. 4). It signifies that he has sacrificed his life for mankind. "He was tormented, but suffered freely" (Ib. 7), namely, he accepted the death assigned to him, *voluntarily*. "He was taken from prison and judgment and who shall consider his generation" (liii. 7), *i. e.*, there is none to recognize or acknowledge his seed. "And for the transgression of the people death came upon him, and he made his grave by the wicked" (ib. 7), indicating that he was hanged be-

tween two thieves. It is clearly manifest to me, that all these scriptural passages point to our Messiah Jesus, and serve to refute the statements of his opponents, who would doubt his mission and his adventures."

Israelite: "Many weighty objections could be urged against this theory. In the first place: Should we concede that primeval man was punished for his sin, with the soul-penalty, his soul having been consigned to Gehinom unto eternity, which is not recorded in Holy Writ; secondly: Can we believe that Adam atoned for his transgressions by the punishment of the soul; thirdly: If we admit that the soul-penalty was incumbent upon him, whether the offspring of the first man were thereby affected? All these points are elaborately discussed in the first chapter.* Aside from all other considerations, your conception in reference to the explanation of this chapter, is at variance with its literal interpretation. For, if the expression: "Behold my servant shall be prosperous" (verbatim: "shall be enlightened"), relate to Jesus, it is obvious, that up to the time, when this prediction shall have gone into effect, he was not enlightened, and such

* pp. 1a—6a.

an assumption would be inconsistent with the idea of the Deity. Should the passage in question signify, that he will eventually become aware of the right conception and understanding, in his capacity as a Divine power, he ought to have been familiar with the beginning and end of all things, by dint of his penetration. Why then should Scripture endow him with comprehension at the end; is it compatible with the supposed superior knowledge attributed to him? How can it be said: "He shall come to an understanding," as if such could ever be withdrawn from him? If, however, **ישכיל** be synonymous with **יצליה**, as is frequently the case, for it is written: "David was prosperous in all his ways" (1 Sam. xviii, 14), the question arises whether the prosperity revealed through him is a mental or corporeal one? In view of the first consideration, argued above, a spiritual welfare or the lack of it, is not justifiable, and from a bodily standpoint, likewise untenable, as illustrated by his disastrous end.

How is it possible that the Lord of the Universe should call a part of his own essential being "my servant?" Not a servant for reason of his mortal frame, for behold "enlightenment" is mentioned first, and only

then follows the impression: "He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high" (lii. 13), which are all attributes of God, according to your own statement. The same interpretation holds good for the word "servant." This designation is tendered not so much for his bodily shape, as in recognition of his enlightened soul; with more regard for his inner soul, than for his exterior appearance. Enlightenment in this case is not possible, for the body is spoken of, not the soul.

"He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high." The *future tense* is used here. I should much like to know, whether the allusion to his revealed exaltation is a spiritual or corporeal one, with respect to his human or his divine quality, for, from a corporeal point of view, he suffered only ridicule, degradation, and death, not as *you* would interpret in harmony with the Scriptural passage, for he enjoyed no exaltation or elevation whatever, according to the prophecy pointed out by you, yourself. The employment of the future tense is certainly not in concurrence with his godliness, God being at *all times* "exalted and extolled and very high."

"His visage was so marred unlike to a man, and his form unlike to the sons of men' (lii.,'

13), and further below it is recorded that "he had no form nor majesty that we should regard him, and no beauty that we should desire him" (liii. 1). "He was despised, and forsaken of men, a man of pains" etc. (ibid.) All these citations tend to illustrate that in contradiction to other versions, describing him as comely of appearance, and gracefully shaped, he was homely, weak and uncouth. Should you, perchance, assert that this deterioration took place only at the point of death, (then your argument is erratic), he would only share this experience in common with any other mortal, who, when about to die, looses color, changes appearance, and becomes generally deformed.

"Acquainted with sickness," (ib. 1) is only congruous, if the malady be inseparable from the body throughout his life-time, which is not so in the case of Jesus, as it is not chronicled that he was always ill, but only on the day of his death, and death is nowhere styled "sickness."

Christian: I do not venture to dispute your argument in regard to the verse: "His visage was so marred, unlike to a man," for one changes with the drift of circumstance. The deformity dates *before* his death, while

they tormented him, as was known to all Israel, who gathered to celebrate the festival.

Israelite: Your theory, that man changes with the drift of circumstance, *i. e.* under infliction of pain or torture, bears no substantiation. For we read: "He grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (liii, 1), signifying, that from the period of his "first coming up," he suffered a metamorphosis. If then, "he had no form or majesty," we should like to be informed, when was he, at any rate, "a tender plant?" Furthermore, "acquainted with sickness" can not be attributed to the injuries received by maltreatment, for hanging followed close upon his abuse, as chronicled in Evang. Matthew ch. cvi*; consequently he had no time to fall ill, on account of the outrages perpetrated against him. Nor is it stated anywhere, that his illness was caused by the blows he received. They did not strike him heavily either, but smote him out of pure mockery, so as to humiliate him. And even if this were all true, the passage ought to read: "He was acquainted with *hits*, and not sickness."

"Surely he did bear our sickness, and

*) Misquoted for chapter xxvi.

carry our pains." (liii,4). This can have no reference to those doomed in Gehinom to expiate for Adam's sin, for the soul-punishment must not be termed a species of illness, especially if it be such, as he can endure and burden himself with. Not even ye declare that your God assumed the burden and penalty of Hell. Hence, it is evident, that the above statement is erroneously interpreted, whilst its actual purport is that, he took upon himself those maladies, which he removed from them. For this reason it is said: "We esteemed him, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" (liii, 4), because he himself was smitten and afflicted.

Should this be explained in reference to his pains and death, then the phrase, "*Our* sickness and pains" is not comprehensible, for the death which the Jews caused him can not be called "sicknesses and pains." None the more intelligible is the sentence "In his wounds we are healed" (liii, 4), as if to say, that we suffered from maladies and pains, and He, having freed us of our thralldom by taking our troubles upon himself, has healed us thereby.

Besides, "smitten of *God* and afflicted" is a corrupt rendering, which ought to be

amended into "smitten of *man*". Furthermore, how can it be said, that he is smitten of *God*, indicating a Divine Power above, if he be himself a Deity? Moreover, your own version of this passage reads "he was punished because of his deserving punishment," therefore the correct interpretation would be "*Killed of God*," for the penalty imposed upon him were not pains and beatings, but death. "The Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all" (liii, 4). From this it is clearly apparent, that the Almighty put it upon him, and he succumbed. How can a God succumb? And, to still further quote your theories, you maintain that only the flesh can suffer. And is the term "smiting" applicable to God?

"He was cut off out of the land of the living" (liii, 7). How can you construe this verse as referring to Jesus and his death, when Scripture adds the clause: "For the transgression of my people, *they* were stricken" (ibid) *they*, the plural is used, signifying a collection of bodies, not a single individual, whilst in harmony with your conception, the text ought to read: "*He* was stricken." And indeed to bridge over this obstacle, Christian translators invariably

render: "*He* was stricken," a very grievous error by the way.

Christian: The plural expression *they*, denotes the ban of suffering which the Jews must undergo in eternal exile, to atone for His death.

Israelite: If this were the case, the appellation "my people" would be entirely inconsistent with the spirit of your arguments, for they were his enemies. He should have rather indicated *the people in general*, as it is noted: (Exod. xxxii, 7) "Step down, for corrupt is thy people." Moreover, the very fact, that, even *after* his death, and despite the sin they committed, the designation "my people" was accorded to them, proves beyond any doubt, that they still enjoyed the confidential title "the chosen people" vouchsafed unto them by God.

"He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death" (ibid. 7). You interpret this verse likewise in relation to Jesus, whose death was due to the wicked, namely, Israel; according to your conception, it ought to read: "He gave to the wicked his *death*, not his grave," for, you argue, Israel did not afflict him through his death alone, nor by his grave. The second por-

tion of the sentence: "and with the rich in his death" is devoid of all reason.

Furthermore, your assertion "he gave the wicked his grave," indicating, that he was hanged between two thieves, is incorrect, for it should be added, his death, not his grave was with the wicked, for he was not interred with the thieves, as the words "his grave," seem to imply.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he had put him to grief" (liii, 10). If he was a God, desirous of taking upon himself these pains, that he may, as you affirm, redeem the soul of the righteous from Purgatory, why is it then especially stated: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him," as if God found gratification in afflicting himself with suffering. "pleasing," means, at any rate, what has no known cause, not what is committed with a fixed purpose. This holds good for the second verse particularly: "When he should make his soul a trespass offering" (ibid.). How can this be justifiable in reference to God, an abstract Deity? Can a God sin and atone for his transgressions? Can he redeem his own soul by a trespass offering? And should it indicate that his *soul* died, how is this remark recon-

cilable with your former assertion regarding the exclusive mortality of the flesh?

“He should see a seed, he should prolong his days and the pleasure of God should prosper in his Hand” (liii, 10).

It is related, that Jesus died in his youth, having been executed at the age of 32, and he did not live sufficiently long to see issue, neither son, nor daughter, hence the prophecy regarding his posterity and longevity is not fulfilled. Should you, however, have in view the prolongation of his life, you would be guilty of an irrational theory, for limited time is only restricted in the sublunar sphere, not in the spiritual world.

It is furthermore known, that God knows, sees, beholds and inspects what was, and what will be, whilst here, it is plainly noted: “he *will* see,” as if this transparency of sight were only accorded to him at a certain period.

Christian: “He will see seed,” is meant in respect to his disciples, who with their pupils are said to be endowed with prolonged lives. And by the clause “he poured out his soul unto death” (liii. 10), the departure of the soul from the flesh, is implied.

Israelite: The assumption, that “seed” denotes pupils and followers is valueless, as

the term *seed* is only applicable to mortal descendants, but never employed in the metaphorical sense, for which purpose "son" would be more appropriate.

Moreover, "he will see seed," signifies that he will yet see offspring and their descendants during his life-time, which was not the case with Jesus, as is well known. "And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand" can only be applied to man, who performs his pleasures through others, not in affairs, which concerns his own person.

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the multitude, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (liii. 10). If you refer by the designation "multitude" to the large number of followers, how do you explain the division of the spoils? Was he a warrior, that he should desire to share the booty?

Common sense and literal interpretation combined, the prophecy set forth in the above chapters, is not to be properly interpreted by means of such perverse arguments and theories.

* * *

The dialogue runs only to page 59. The next seven pp. are devoted to most ingenious

comments* upon the prophecy of Isaiah liii. in general, which we are constrained to omit, as our article has already exceeded the limits originally prescribed. They are worthy of wider circulation; in fact the whole work is of a character, which merits careful perusal, and should some of our Semitic chairs, enthused by the spirit of philosophic research and sound exegesis, which breathes through the discussions of our able author, assist us in our enterprise, the proper energy and studious labor will not be wanting on our part. We propose, who shall dispose?

Note.

A most remarkable essay was published by our late lamented friend and teacher, Dr. Heinrich Graetz, Professor of the Rabbinical Seminary in Breslau, some thirty years ago in the Year Book for 5624 (1863-1864), printed at Vienna and edited by Mr. Joseph

* They are similar to the well-known observations of the two renowned polemicists Isaac Troqui (cf. "*Chisuk Emunah*," Engl. transl.: "Faith Strengthened." By Moses Mocatta, London, 1851 [priv. printed] p. 140 ff.), and of R. Lipmanni in *Liber Nizachon*, ed. *Noribergae*, 1644, p. 129 ff.

Wertheimer and Leopold Kompert. The paper, entitled "The Rejuvenation of the Jewish Race," created an immense sensation, and involved both author and editor in a law suit, for having offended a religion tolerated by the state. The article is a most brilliant production both from a philosophic and critical point of view, and its appreciation in scientific circles is demonstrated by the fact that in a very brief space of time, translations were made into almost every living language.* We commend this eloquent plea of Dr. Graetz to our reader's notice. (For the particulars of the trial and bitter strifes caused by Dr. G.'s essay, we refer all concerned to the exhaustive accounts in Dr. Leeser's "*Occident*," pp. 49, 97, 145, 203 ff.)

* An English version appeared in Dr. Leeser's "*Occident & American Jewish Advocate*, Vol. XII., Philadelphia, 5625, pp. 193-203.



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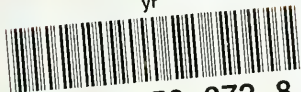
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